

# INTRODUCTION

## To The Teacher

Welcome! This booklet has been designed to help teachers, chaperones and students prepare for a Self-Guided Visit to the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum and to enhance the educational value and enjoyment of the field trip. We recommend that a Desert Museum visit coincide with classroom studies of desert ecology or natural history. We developed this packet of Sonoran Desert information and activities to contribute to your classroom ecology unit; this booklet is not intended to be a complete curriculum on its own. We hope you find this information useful and easy to incorporate into your science curriculum. All materials are designed to be used by middle school students and may be duplicated for student and chaperone use. For more information on the Desert Museum and the Sonoran Desert visit our web site at [www.desertmuseum.org](http://www.desertmuseum.org).

This booklet contains pre- and post- visit information and activities to accompany the *Explorer's Guide* to the Desert Museum.

- **Pre-visit Information and Activities:** The background reading provides students with information on plants, animals, people and environmental conditions of the Sonoran Desert Region. Each section in the reading is correlated to specific Museum exhibits and contains information that will help students successfully complete the *Explorer's Guide*. The *Create a Museum Exhibit* activity introduces students to museums, the process of creating and building exhibits, and the variety of careers at natural history institutions such as the Desert Museum. By completing pre-visit readings and activities, students will be able to more accurately anticipate and understand what they will see at the Desert Museum.
- **Explorer's Guide:** The purpose of the *Explorer's Guide* is to encourage students to make careful observations of plants, animals and artifacts while on their field trip, as well as read exhibits signs. Students should work on the *Explorer's Guide* while touring the Desert Museum.
- **Post-visit Activities:** Post-visit activities give students a chance to synthesize information learned before and during their trip, and will help students construct their own understanding of the components and ecology of the Sonoran Desert Region.

We welcome and value your comments, suggestions and/or questions concerning this packet. The information and activities have been developed and revised based on teacher, chaperone, student and staff recommendations over a number of years. We appreciate your taking the time to complete the **enclosed evaluation form**. If you develop any lessons or activities related to desert ecology and a Museum visit that work well with your students, please send us a copy.

Sincerely,

ASDM Education Department



ARIZONA-SONORA  
DESERT  
MUSEUM

## Objectives

Through the use of these materials and a visit to the Museum, your students should:

- Become familiar with the diversity of life in the Sonoran Desert,
- Understand that all components of a desert ecosystem are important and interconnected,
- Describe plant and animal adaptations that help each survive and thrive here,
- Become aware of the differences between the desert grasslands, mountain islands and riparian corridors within the Sonoran Desert Region,
- Become familiar with different groups of indigenous people of this region,
- Describe some effects humans have had on the Sonoran Desert Region,
- Develop an appreciation of the intrinsic value of the desert and list ways we can conserve it,
- Become familiar with the process of creating a museum exhibit, and
- Become aware of the career opportunities at a natural history institution such as the Desert Museum.

## Arizona Academic Standards in Science

The student readings and activities in this booklet combined with a Self-Guided Visit to the Desert Museum correlate with the following Arizona Academic Standards in Science:

1SC-E1, 1SC-E2, 3SC-E1, 3SC-E3, 3SC-E4, 4SC-F3, 4SC-F4, 4SC-E7

## PRE-VISIT INFORMATION AND ACTIVITIES

### Teacher Information

This section contains background information and pre-visit activity directions and handouts for use with your students.

- A. Suggested Resources** includes a list of books and pamphlets on deserts including the Sonoran Desert Region. All are recommended by our Education Department staff, and some are available in the Desert Museum Gift Shop. ASDM publications may also be ordered using purchase orders or credit cards by calling the publications manager at (520) 883-3028. Prices are listed. Web sites and a video are also included.
- B. *A Look at the Sonoran Desert*** provides you and your students with background information on the Sonoran Desert Region. A glossary is included. Please make copies of this information for all students to read before visiting the Museum. Review questions are included to check for understanding, and extension questions provide for critical thinking opportunities.
- C. Activities:** These activities include teacher guidelines and handouts for interdisciplinary science experiences designed to introduce students to the Sonoran Desert Region and help them understand basic ecological concepts such as adaptations and conservation. Activities also explore the purposes of museums, process of exhibit design and construction, and museum careers. They range from hands-on, inquiry-based activities to role-playing.

## SUGGESTED RESOURCES

### Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum Press (adult books)

To order using a purchase order or credit card, call the publications manager at (520) 883-3028.

- ASDM, *A Natural History of the Sonoran Desert*. (A comprehensive guide to the plants, animals and geology of the Sonoran Desert Region; excerpts on our web site.) Soft cover \$24.95, Cloth cover \$55
- Dahl, K., *Wild Foods of the Sonoran Desert*. Paperback \$4.95
- Friederici, P., *Strangers In Our Midst, The Startling World of Sonoran Desert Arthropods*. Paperback \$4.95
- Hanson, J. and R. Beggy, *Desert Dogs: Coyotes, Foxes & Wolves Desert Holes*. Paperback \$4.95
- Ingram, M., *Gardening for Pollinators*. Brochure \$3.95, Poster \$9.
- Laney, N., *Desert Waters, From Ancient Aquifers to Modern Demands*. Paperback \$4.95
- Lazaroff, D.W., *ASDM Book of Answers*. Paperback \$14.95
- Lazaroff, D.W., *The Secret Lives of Hummingbirds*. Paperback \$4.95
- Merlin, P., *A Field Guide To Desert Holes*. Paperback \$7.50

### Activity Books

- Braus, J., ed. Ranger Rick's Nature Scope: *Deserts Count!* Washington D.C.: National Wildlife Federation, 1985. (For ordering information call: 1-800-722-4726)
- Braus, J., ed. Ranger Rick's Nature Scope: *Let's Hear It For Herps!* Washington D.C.: National Wildlife Federation, 1987.

### Books for Middle School Students

- Mc Carthy, C. *Eyewitness Books: Desert*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991. (Many other books in the *Eyewitness* series contain information on desert species.)

**Video** (often available at public libraries or through your school)

- Saguaro, Sentinel of the Desert. (*The Best of Nature*)

### Web sites

- ASDM: [www.desertmuseum.org](http://www.desertmuseum.org)
- Desert USA: [www.desertusa.com/animal.html](http://www.desertusa.com/animal.html)
- Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan: [www.co.pima.az.us/cmo/sdcp](http://www.co.pima.az.us/cmo/sdcp)
- The Nature Conservancy: [www.tnc.org](http://www.tnc.org)
- Tucson Herpetological Society: [www.azstarnet.com/~bsavary/circanim.html](http://www.azstarnet.com/~bsavary/circanim.html)